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Class. CHANGED TO: TS S C

DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763

Date: 14/11/77 By: 010

20 December 1948

DOCUMENT NO.

NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐☐ DECLASSIFIEDCLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S 2007

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

AUTH: HR 70-2

DATE: 2/12/79 REVIEWER: 029804

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 102

SUBJECT: CIA Comments for JIG on [REDACTED] "Middle East Communist Survey for Period 15th July-30th September 1948."

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1. General.

It appears that subject report would not be a sound basis for a current study of Communism in the Middle East. Many trends which were developing during the period 15 July-30 September have not matured and in some instances have been reversed by events during the past two months.

2. Greece.

While it is true that the Tito-Cominform split put both KKE and Tito (with respect to continuing aid to the guerrillas) in difficult positions, Yugoslavia has not cut off supplies from Markos. On the contrary, the determination of Yugoslavia to go along with Albania and Bulgaria in the Greek matter has been clearly indicated by the Yugoslav stand in the recent Evatt reconciliation talks in Paris. Furthermore, it is not likely that the split had any direct bearing on the outcome of the Grammos battle. The guerrilla escape route was entirely through Albania, and the guerrilla defeat was not caused by lack of supplies.

Subject study appears to put too much weight on the one report that the Cominform has notified KKE to find a peaceful solution to the Greek problem. The Cominform may have been concerned that Markos' manpower reserve is running low, but guerrilla current recruiting efforts show a determination to continue the struggle and are obtaining a significant degree of success. So far, guerrilla attempts at "conciliation" are probably no more than propaganda designed to weaken the Greek will to resist.

In spite of numerous reports of the existence of independent Slavo-Macedonian units, no such units have been identified in operation since 1946. These units are probably only paper organizations or else training or reserve cadres in Yugoslavia. Further, it is not believed that one of KKE's reasons for seeking peace is the growth of nationalist sentiment amongst Communist leaders as a result of the Macedonian question. Just what sort of deal KKE has made with the satellites concerning the disposition

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of Macedonia is an important question which has not yet been answered. However, those Greek Communists who were most nationalistic (Zevgos, Siantos, Berkirdjis, etc.) have long been dead; the surviving leaders are internationally minded and can probably keep the rank and file from crystallizing any ideas on this particular problem.

While it is true that party organizations in the towns were especially reproved for inactivity (see Zachariades' "All to Arms, All for Victory") and have been reorganized, the reorganization has not yet borne fruit.

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It is misleading to say that [REDACTED]

The party has little or no influence on the GSEE except possibly in some local units. There have been numerous strikes, but these were legitimate, as it were, and few if any were protracted beyond their announced duration of a few hours or a day.

3. Cyprus.

Apart from one highly improbable report concerning arms traffic between Cyprus and Rhodes, we have received no definite information on an increase in arms held by the AKEL, although an increase is entirely possible.

The penalty for the possession of explosives has been increased to 6 months, which under the circumstances can scarcely be called "heavy."

The additional threat to the security of Cyprus represented by the 11,000 Jews in internment camps should certainly be mentioned.

4. Arab States.

Had we been asked to comment on this report two months ago we would have had little criticism to make of its general conclusions. Many trends which were developing during the period 15 July-30 September, however, have not matured and in some instances they have been reversed by events during the past two months.

There does not appear to have been any basic reorganization of Communist strategy in the Arab states' area. Solod, Soviet Minister to Lebanon and alleged leader of Communist forces in all the Arab states, has recently returned to Beirut. He may have brought back with him plans for a decisive change in Communist strategy, but there has as yet been no evidence of such a change.

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The increase in Communist pressure in Iraq during the summer months has not continued. Aside from continued unrest in the Kurdish areas, the Iraqi Communists appear to have lost ground. Continuing instability, occasioned by the Palestine issue and economic and financial difficulties, has resulted in a gradual shift to the political right. The "Old Guard" politicians, such as Nuri Said, are slowly returning to power, and increasingly stringent measures against the Communists and other left-wing groups are being instituted. The recent voluntary dissolution of the National Democratic Party is a measure of the declining influence of left-wing groups in Iraq.

In Israel, in spite of the success achieved by Soviet representatives in penetrating the Russian Orthodox Church, the indigenous Communists have had a number of setbacks. Mapam (left-wing socialist party) turned down the Palestine Communist Party's bid to present a combined slate of candidates in the coming 25 January elections. Through the active interference of the Provisional Government of Israel, the labor monopoly held by the Arab Communist labor union in Nazareth is in the process of being broken.

During the UNESCO Conference in Lebanon, Communist activities were severely curtailed, and after the demonstration before the UNESCO Conference building, Mustapha el Aris, Lebanon's leading Communist, was placed under arrest. In general, Communists in both Syria and Lebanon appear to have been unable to take any particular advantage of the increasing political and economic difficulties facing these two countries.

We have no evidence that Communists have infiltrated Kuwait or any other of the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms.

As in Syria and Lebanon, Communists in Egypt appear to have been unable to take advantage of increasing internal instability. They were not significantly involved in any of the recent disturbances in Cairo.

In Tripolitania the "Italian Political Association for the Progress of Libya" is now believed to be Communist.

5. Iran.

There is no evidence to warrant the supposition that the Soviets are curtailing the operations of their own agencies in Iran in the belief that the Tudeh Party is now in a position to supplant Soviet officials

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in the matter of spreading pro-Soviet propaganda and Soviet influence. The memorandum presented by the Tudeh to the Prime Minister shortly after the departure of the Soviet Ambassador merely repeats demands previously made on Iranian governments by Iranian leftists and by the Soviets and was undoubtedly inspired by the latter. The Soviets will, however, make full use of the resurgent Tudeh, which is considered their chief instrument in Iran, and will support it by every practicable means, including financial.

We have never considered the return of numerous Soviet diplomatic and consular officials to the USSR last summer as a permanent withdrawal or reduction of staff. Several of these officials have returned to Iran, and in some instances consular staffs have been expanded. Moreover, the Rumanian Embassy recently opened in Tehran has a number of Moslems on its staff and is suspected of being charged with carrying out the work of the Cominform in the area.

Although some of the Soviet commercial agencies have curtailed their official operations and many members of their staffs have returned to the USSR, these measures are probably temporary, and it is believed that the clandestine activities of these agencies are being continued. According to recent reports, Soviet agents are increasingly active among the Kurdish tribes in Northwestern Iran.

The considerable movement of Soviet diplomatic, consular, and commercial representatives to the USSR during the summer can probably be attributed to: (a) grants of leave; (b) summonses for consultations in the Kremlin, possibly concerning a new Soviet policy in the Middle East; (c) the recall of incompetent or unreliable personnel; and (d) diminished trade between the USSR and Iran.

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